



# OMUG

<http://www.oly mug.org>

NEWS



Vol. 12, No. 11

Olympia Microcomputer Users Group

November 2004

## Holidays require date changes for meetings

By Bill Gortz  
OMUG President

**W**e are entering into what many of us think is the best part of the year with all of the fun days and holidays coming.

By now all of the ghosts, goblins and other scary things have gone and hopefully the “tricks or treats” were good ones and we can move into the rest of the holiday season with some joy.

The holidays can also cause some changes to occur in the OMUG normal schedule; as is the case this month with holidays coming at the same time as our scheduled activities. As a reminder, the following meeting dates have been changed:

- ◆ The general meeting will be on the third Thursday, Nov. 18, as Veterans Day falls on our regularly scheduled meeting date.
- ◆ The OMUG Business Meeting has been moved to Wednesday, Nov. 17.
- ◆ The Windows SIG has been cancelled as it would have fallen on Thanksgiving Day.

All of these changes have been noted on the enclosed monthly calendar.

For December, the normal presentation will give way to the annual Potluck and Silent Auction.

Our vice president and program chair, Shirley Bellinghausen, will be giving out more information on this in the coming days through the Reflector and at the



November meeting.

Shirley can't do everything herself (although she tries awfully hard to do so) and can use all the help she can get. If you are willing to assist, please let her know.

For a lot of people games have become a major part of home computing and I am sure that many a Christmas stocking will contain a game or two. If you have ever wondered how some of these games are created, then you may just find out at the January general meeting. Our scheduled presenter is a game programmer who will let us know some of what game designers do. It should be an interesting meeting.

This month the presentation will be from our own John Acocks. John says the real focus of the presentation Nov. 18 will be on how to edit old family movies using a computer.

He will be using Microsoft's Movie Maker program to do this, which is available to anyone using Windows XP. The process will be educational and interesting and I am sure we can learn some other things during the presentation.

Happy Holidays!

## Check 'em out, don't forward

By Gabe Goldberg  
APCUG Advisor, Region 2

**S**pam and malware — nasty virus, worm, spyware, and such software — turn many peoples' e-mail inboxes into bloated wastelands. Anti-virus and anti-spyware tools help prune the weeds. But another hazard lurks as innocent-seeming e-mail: hoaxes, chain letters, and sob stories, all urgently demanding that you “Forward this to everyone you know, right now!”

Many of them come from well-meaning friends, relatives, and colleagues. Others come from legitimate mailing lists you've subscribed to, and some surely come as spam. They often have a common structure: they tell a plausible story, cite seemingly authentic sources, contain specific details, offer a compelling reward or threaten something scary, and issue a call to action.

Before following the instructions, remember that something isn't true just because it's on the Internet, whether as an e-mail or a Web page article. It was said early-on that the Internet makes everyone a publisher. While that can be true, it doesn't mean that everything published is true or

See CHAIN LETTERS, Page



## EXECUTIVE BOARD

**President:** Bill Gortz  
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**Vice President:** Shirley  
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vicepresident@olymug.org

**Secretary:** Vivian Forrester  
secretary@olymug.org

**Treasurer:** Max Whipps  
treasurer@olymug.org

**Newsletter Editor:** Sandy  
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**Webmaster:** Pat Sonnenstuhl,  
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**Librarian:** Christie McCormick,  
librarian@olymug.org

**Director at Large:** James  
Gunnells, director1@olymug.org

**Director at Large:** John Marshall,  
director2@olymug.org

### KEY MEMBERS

**APCUG Representative:** Linda Mae

**Budget Committee Chair:** Bill Gortz

**Database Manager:** Max Whipps

**Elections Chair:** Vacant

**Historian:** David Belles

**Membership Chair:** James Gunnells

**Membership Renewal Coordinator:**

Max Whipps

**Newsletter Distribution Coordinator:**

Loren Freeman

**Nominating Committee Chair:** Vacant

**Scholarship Committee Chair:**

Bob Wing

**SIG Coordinator:** Shirley Bellinghausen

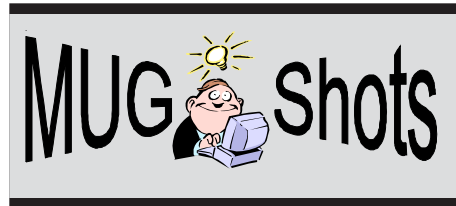
**Visitors Coordinator:** Elizabeth Ross

**SIG Leader names are listed with  
their SIG descriptions**

The Olympia Microcomputer Users Group is a not for profit organization dedicated to helping computer users improve their skills with computers.

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## Silent auction great opportunity

By Sandy Pishner  
OMUG Newsletter Editor

I don't know about you, but I have tons of software I no longer use just sitting on my shelf. Mostly games I either have no interest in playing, or no time to play. I also have older versions of various programs that, while I have no use for them, others might.

I also have a computer chair sitting in my garage (along with everything else my husband shoves out there because he doesn't know where to put it.)

It was the chair that got me to thinking about what a great opportunity the upcoming silent auction will be to clean house. I have a perfectly good chair sitting in the garage, it was our computer chair, so it's compute-related, so hey! Perfect item for the computer club silent auction in December. Along with the mired of software I have. So come one, come all. It's a great chair! Or would you prefer a computer game?

## Welcome to our New Members

PAT PERRY  
ED GRINDROD  
JOHN TISSELL  
PHYLLIS NATION

## Thanks For Renewing

Helen Wilder  
Elizabeth & Keith Ross  
Wesley & Marjorie  
Wilson  
Sister Dorothy  
Robinson, OSB  
Sharon Love  
Bill & Mary Gortz  
Michael Cobb  
David, Marcy,  
& Nathan Belles  
Dick Bostic  
Mike Cleland  
Lucille Phillips  
John Lafler  
Kathleen & Tom Gray  
Peggy Wilson  
May Murrell  
Josephine & Vince Ortiz  
Jim Sweeney  
Mickey & Wilma Riley  
Kath, Michael,  
& Stephanie Thorn  
Sandra & Rick Pishner

# Frankenstein project comes to end

By Sandy Pishner  
Newsletter Editor

The October board meeting was convened at 7 p.m. in the Olympia Center Oct. 21. Members present were Bill Gortz, president; Shirley Bellinghausen, vice president; Max Whipps, treasurer; Chris McCormick, librarian; Pat Sonnenstuhl, web master; James Gunnells and John Marshall, directors at large; and Sandy Pishner, newsletter editor. Absent from the meeting was Vivian Forrester, secretary.

John announced he is giving up the Frankenstein Project and that the Senior Center, who co-sponsors the project, doesn't want anyone else to carry it on through the Senior Center due to security concerns. Items left over from the project will go into the December silent auction and he has notified vendors to stop referring recipients for the computers. For the Frankenstein project to continue, a volunteer with a place to operate the project from will need to step forward.

Shirley announced that the guest speaker at the November general membership meeting would be John Acocks, OMUG member. John will present how to use Microsoft's Movie Maker to convert old family videos to your computer. He will show a clip of Loren Freeman's birthday that he created with Movie Maker. Loren is also an OMUG member.

Shirley also reminded all that the OMUG December auction and potluck is open to the public, as are all OMUG meetings. Shirley sent out auction forms to the membership via the Reflector. She asks that members start letting her know what they will be bringing to the auction and to have their auction forms filled out ahead of time. This makes setting up the auction much easier.

For the January program, Shirley has lined up a speaker who will talk about how computer games are designed.

John reported that they tend to run out of newsletters and brochures in the Senior Center computer room within a week



of putting them out. It was discussed and decided that more brochures could be provided but that it would not be cost effective to produce more newsletters as a recruiting tool. It was pointed out also that the newsletter is available on the OMUG web site.

James announced the first Hot Topics meeting on Microsoft Access was held. They had a big group and they're off and running for at a minimum of four sessions with this topic.

Pat reported that there have been no complaints about the web or reflector and so all seems to be going well. She has added special effects to the web page and encouraged everybody to take a look and let her know what they think. Bill commented that the special effects slow down those with dial up and Shirley questioned how many people had that problem as well. Max said that about 30 percent of members have Comcast cable.

Pat asked James about developing a customer comment page that would allow members to provide input to the club via the web page. Max would also like to be able to use the customer comment form to survey the membership on a variety of topics.

James offered up the opinion that we should supplement our library by providing a shareware library.

Max recommended a bylaws committee be appointed as soon as possible so bylaws can be adjusted prior to the next board election.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.



OMUG Income & Expenses		
September 2004		
<b>Income: \$275</b>		
[Mbr Dues-\$272 Interest-\$3]		
<b>Expenses: \$150</b>		
[Newsletter Copying-\$125, SSSS Donation-\$25.]		
<b>Net Income: \$125</b>		
<b>Account Balance: \$4294</b>		<b>10/25/04</b>
<b>To Be Deposited: \$80</b>		
<b>Current Treasury: \$4374 (Incl. Scholarship Fund)</b>		

# Smart Tags

## What they are, how to use them

By Linda Gonse

Orange County IBM PC Users Group

To some, Smart Tags may be a valuable tool. To others, they are a pain in the index finger.

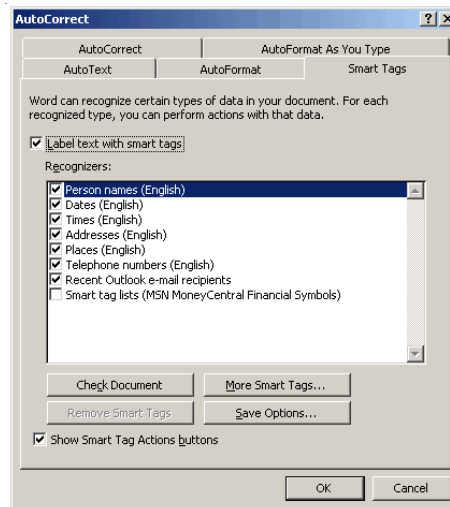
If you've never seen Smart Tags before, you may not know what they are, or how they work. Smart Tags seemingly pop up when you least expect them in a Word 2003 (XP) document.

Briefly, Smart Tags are prompted by seven types of information, called "recognizers": People's names, dates, times, addresses, places, phone numbers, and recent e-mail recipients in Outlook. Word uses the recognizers to bring you additional choices related to them.

Smart Tags and the options for using them are located on your tool bar, under Tools. Click on AutoCorrect, and the Smart Tags tab to access them. You can check or uncheck certain "recognizers," such as people's names, to customize the tags for your style of use and needs.

Depending on which recognizer you type, two things happen. First, a small, yellow text box - similar to a tool tip when your cursor hovers over toolbar buttons - appears over a partially-typed recognizer and offers to auto-complete it. You can accept the offer by pressing Enter, or if you continue to type, the text box will disappear.

Secondly, after you have typed a recognizer, a small box with a down arrow will appear above the entry. Clicking on the down arrow triggers a submenu to open, offering you specific options for the information. The tags were designed to help you do your work faster by bringing relevant choices to you, instead of you taking time to locate them.



This is where the conflict arises between the helped and the helper. Similar to ClipIt and the other Office Assistants, Smart Tags can be distracting and interrupt your work flow. And, they can obscure other text you may want to see. Take it from me, a couple of helpful Smart Tags in one paragraph can incite you to "page rage" pretty fast!

But, suppose you need all the help you can get and let's say you've just typed a person's name in your document. If the box was checked on the Smart Tags tab, the name would be recognized by Word and a Smart Tag would appear next to it. You can take your pick from a list of whether to Send Mail, Schedule a Meeting, Open or Add to Outlook Contacts, and Insert Address.

Smart Tag help is probably like a glass of frosty tea on a hot day to people who have trouble spelling. Just spell the first four letters of a month, for instance, and a Smart Tag will be there like a flash spelling the entire word for you.

How many times have you been startled in the middle of typing a word by seeing the previous word suddenly

capitalized? Suppose you didn't want it AutoCorrected? Smart Tags will give you a chance to quickly change it back to lower case with a tag that has a picture of a lightning bolt on it.

On the other hand, you may decide to go to Tools, AutoCorrect, and take that check mark off of Capitalize the First Letter of a Sentence, and be done with this situation henceforth and forever.

Smart Tags also include a box with a picture of a clipboard that appears under text that you have pasted. This gives you choices on your pasted selection. This may not be a bad idea. Even nicer, is that the Paste Options box doesn't cover your pasted text, unlike other Smart Tags.

If you want to have the Smart Tags, but not the yellow text labels, go to the Smart Tags tab and deselect "Label text with Smart Tags." You'll still have the popup Smart Tags with context menus.

But, you can limit these to appear without some of the recognizers by unchecking the boxes next to them. Or, you can turn them off completely by deselecting the box at the bottom of the tab, "Show Smart Tag Actions Buttons."

Interestingly, the Smart Tags themselves have a button at the bottom of their context menus called "Smart Tag Options." Click on this menu item and a Smart Tag tab allows you to make similar tweaks, including turning Smart Tags off.

*The Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization of which this group is a member, brings this article to you.*

# CHAIN LETTERS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

well-intended.

I've seen earnest warnings posted to work-topic mailing lists, such as a story about a new method of carjacking becoming common at gas stations. A five-second Google search on carjacking hoax "gas station" revealed dozens of links such as

<http://hoaxbusters.ciac.org/HBScareChains.shtml> which show the warning to be a hoax.

A similar bogus post cautioned not to blink headlights at cars driving with their headlights off at night, lest one become a target for gang violence. Searching on headlights "gang initiation" revealed sites including <http://www.snopes.com/horrors/madmen/lightout.asp>.

Another type of hoax masquerades as virus alerts, suggesting searching for a specific file on your PC, warning that its presence indicates infection with the virus, and suggesting deleting the file. No surprise, a simple search on the given file name combined with the word "hoax" reveals the warning's hoaxish nature.

A funny parody of such warnings equates following the instructions with banging oneself in the head with a hammer, then sending hammers to everyone you know, telling them to bang themselves in the head. The full text is at <http://mailman.theapt.org/pipermail/sfobug/2004-March/>

[001080.html](http://001080.html)>

Many hoaxes have been around for years; some will soon celebrate 10 or higher birthdays. Just like cicadas — due in many areas this year on their every-17-year visit — hoaxes ebb and flow, decline and are rediscovered and rebroadcast.

Hardy perennials include myths of Bill Gates paying people to forward e-mail so he can track it, and of a Neiman-Marcus cookie recipe rip-off. Another deals with Congress planning an e-mail tax, urging recipients to complain to their legislators and forward the alert. Sometimes details undermine the claims (the supposed Congressional bill number is invalid), sometimes they're well-crafted.

But the important lesson isn't remembering specific debunked hoaxes, it's being suspicious about potentially fictitious news and being able to search for reliable information on such matters.

Remember that Web sites are not equally definitive and reliable. There's a big difference between a niche/hobby/advocacy site — perhaps newly launched — and a long-running site committed to factual analysis, concerned about its reputation, and providing updates, clarifications, and corrections when needed.

Credible and well-regarded debunking sites include:

[www.urbanlegends.com/](http://www.urbanlegends.com/) and [www.snopes.com](http://www.snopes.com). A wonderful reference for all-

things-virus-related is <http://www.vmyths.com/>; its False Authority Syndrome write-up explains how misinformation spreads and why it's important to consider the qualifications of people and organizations making assertions.

Another type of "forward me now" e-mail is sob stories. The granddaddy of Internet tear jerkers is Craig Shergold. A real boy (eight years old in 1989) had a real brain tumor. People close to Craig used a paper chain letter to solicit get well cards to cheer him up and earn listing in the Guinness Book of Records. They succeeded: the million cards received in less than a year took the record.

After 30 million, a philanthropist heard of Craig and paid for surgery. Craig has recovered; he and his family have pleaded for an end to cards. But with Internet-powered networking and new people constantly discovering this "worthy cause" and forwarding appeals to everyone they know, the torrent is unending. The whole story is at <http://urbanlegends.about.com/library/weekly/aa102997.htm>.

Then there are chain letters — what can I say? Unless you've signed up for the "chain letter of the day" club, you're probably not happy to see them. Especially armed with dire threats or implausible promises, chain letters are an imposition on the recipient.

Perhaps once a novelty, especially if they carried

interesting paper letterheads and postmarks, with creative handwritten endorsements, e-mailed chain letters are simply a modern-day irritant. Just don't do it!

Before forwarding anything to anyone, especially to a mailing list or "everyone you know", consider whether your potential addressees really want to receive it. If it's a hoax, chain letter, or sob story, they probably don't. A better course of action is to quietly discard sob stories and chain letters, and to research hoaxes and send debunking information back to the sender.

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